

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 7-12, 15, and 16 are presently active in this application. Claims 5, 6, 13, and 14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 7 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form without the introduction of any new matter.

The Official Action mailed May 6, 2004, included a rejection of Claims 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,124,232, Nakanishi), an indication that Claims 1-4 and 9-12 were allowed and that Claims 7 and 15 were only objected to as depending on a rejected claim. The Advisory Action mailed August 18, 2004, acknowledged that the rejection applied to Claims 8 and 16 was in error as these claims depend on Claim 7 and Claim 15, respectively.

Accordingly the rejection of Claims 8 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakanishi is clearly moot. In view of the cancellation of Claims 5, 6, 13, and 14, the rejection of these claims as being unpatentable over Nakanishi is also believed to be moot.

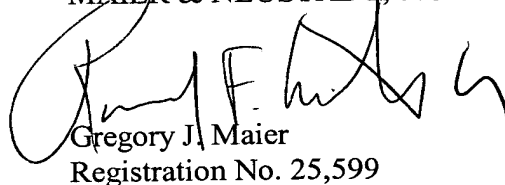
Moreover, as Claim 7 has been rewritten in the suggested independent form to include all of the limitations of intervening Claim 6 and base independent Claim 5, allowance of Claim 7 and Claim 8 dependent on Claim 7 is respectfully urged to be in order. Similarly, as Claim 15 has been rewritten in the suggested independent form to include all of the limitations of intervening Claim 14 and base independent Claim 13, allowance of Claim 15 and Claim 16 dependent on Claim 15 is respectfully urged to be in order.

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As it is believed that no other issues remain outstanding in this application, it is believed that this application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory J. Maier', is written over the printed name.

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